

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, CI

SUBJECT:WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON INTER-AMERICAN
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

1. FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED FOR NOON PRESS BRIEFING TO
RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS ON MARCH 5 ARTICLE BY LEWIS
DIUGUID. NO QUESTIONS WERE ASKED.

Q. WHAT IS THE US REACTION TO THE REPORT THAT THREE
MEMBERS OF THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,
INCLUDING THE US REPRESENTATIVE, WILL NOT SERVE AGAIN
BECAUSE OF THE OAS' HANDLING OF THE CHILEAN HUMAN RIGHTS
ISSUE?

A. THE TERMS OF ALL CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE IA-HRC END
IN JUNE, AND THE OAS MEMBER GOVERNMENTS MUST MAKE NEW
NOMINATIONS BY MARCH 17. WE HAVE NO COMMENT ON INDIVI-
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DUAL MEMBERS' DECISIONS REGARDING RENOMINATION.

THE US WOULD HAVE BEEN PLEASED TO RENOMINATE AMBASSADOR WOODWARD. IT WAS HIS DECISION NOT TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR FURTHER SERVICE, AND FOR A FULL EXPLANATION OF HIS THINKING YOU SHOULD OF COURSE CONSULT HIM. IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH US HE MENTIONED PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ALSO SUGGESTED THE USEFULNESS OF LEGAL TRAINING FOR SERVICE ON THIS COMMISSION.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US WHO THE US WILL NOMINATE?

A. THE US WILL HAVE A STRONG CANDIDATE WHO WILL BE ANNOUNCED SHORTLY. THE USG IN BOTH THE EXECUTIVE AND THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES, HAS TAKEN A STRONGLY POSITIVE INTEREST IN THE IA-HRC.

Q. HAS THE DEPARTMENT SUPPORTED ANOTHER ON-THE-SCENE VISIT TO CHILE BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION BEFORE THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SANTIAGO?

A. ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS STATED THE GENERAL US POSITION ON THIS MATTER IN THE OAS ASSEMBLY LAST MAY WHEN HE SAID THE US QUOTE BELIEVES THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION SHOULD REMAIN SEIZED OF THE ISSUE. A PROCESS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN THE GOC AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IS DESIRABLE, INCLUDING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE COMMISSION TO KEEP ITS INFORMATION UP TO DATE BY ALL MEANS APPROPRIATE. UNQUOTE (THE COMMISSION HAS NOT REQUESTED ANOTHER VISIT TO CHILE SINCE THE ONE MADE IN 1974.)

Q. WHY DID WE AGREE TO HOLD THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SANTIAGO?

A. THE OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL ACCEPTED THE CHILEAN INVITATION BY A VOTE OF SEVENTEEN IN FAVOR, TWO AGAINST, AND FIVE ABSTENTIONS (INCLUDING THE US.)

THE US ABSTAINED IN THE VOTE. IN HIS EXPLANATION OF OUR ABSTENTION, AMBASSADOR MAILLARD POINTED OUT QUOTE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNEASE THAT MY DELEGATION FEELS ABOUT THE PROPRIETY OF HOLDING THE NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN A COUNTRY WHICH HAS FAILED TO ABIDE BY AN UNDERSTANDING REACHED AMONG US IN THE LAST GENERAL ASSEMBLY. UNQUOTE.

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